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MINISTER BLACKBURN WELCOMES TENTATIVE DEAL BETWEEN CN AND UTU

OTTAWA, February 25, 2007 — The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec today welcomed news of the tentative agreement reached February 25, 2007 between CN and the United Transportation Union (UTU).

"The Government of Canada congratulates both parties for making the difficult compromises necessary to reach a negotiated settlement," said Minister Blackburn. "I encourage CN and the UTU's 2,800 conductors and yard-service employees to return to work, to ensure 100% freight and passenger capacity during the ratification process."

The Government of Canada will suspend consideration of Bill C-46, An Act to provide for the resumption and continuation of railway operations, which was introduced in Parliament on February 24, 2007. C-46 will remain on the Order Paper and not be called for debate as the Government waits to learn the results of the ratification vote on Monday, March 26, 2007. Canada's New Government remains prepared to take whatever steps necessary to ensure the strength and stability of the Canadian economy.

Minister Blackburn observed that the inherent balance embodied in the Canada Labour Code aided the successful mediation of this labour dispute. The Minister also thanked the federal mediators from Canada's Labour Ministry who have worked with both parties over the past months.

In conclusion, the Minister stated that the successful resolution of this dispute, under the current provisions of the Canada Labour Code, provides clear evidence that there is no need to amend the existing replacement worker provisions. Private Members' Bill C-257, proposed by the Bloc Quebecois and now at Third Reading Stage in the House of Commons, would have the effect of preventing striking Union members from returning to work during the ratification process.

- 30 -

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All times are reflected in Atlantic time

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